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1864
*The Nature and Necessity of Faith in the
Lord Jesus, and Love unto all the Saints.*

A
S E R M O N

P R E A C H E D A T

S^T. T H O M A S's,

On JANUARY 1, 1771.

F O R

The Benefit of the CHARITY-SCHOOL,
in Gravel-Lane, Southwark.

By ^KJOHN WILLIAMS, LL.D.

Published at the Request of the MANAGERS.

L O N D O N:

Printed, and Sold by G. PEARCH, at N^o 12. Cheapfide;
S. PEYTON, at N^o 50. in the Borough; and by
JOHN BASNETT, at Bath.

M.DCC.LXXI.

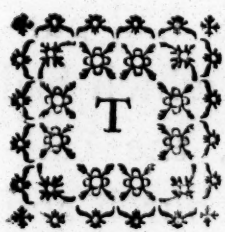
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EPHESIANS i. 15, 16.

*Wherefore I also, after I heard of your Faith
in the Lord Jesus, and Love unto all the
Saints, cease not to give thanks for you.*

 HIS epistle, though inscribed
to the Ephesians, seems to be
of a general nature; for the
writer does not much concern
himself with the affairs or circumstances
of any particular church; but delivers,
first, the doctrines of the gospel, and then
its duties, with a fullness scarcely equalled
in any other of his epistles. This was ob-
served by one of the ancients, who says,
“ that the former part of this epistle, con-
“ tains the doctrines of the gospel, and
“ the latter part, a moral admonition ^a. ”

As the apostle had been closely confined
at Cæsarea above two years, during which

^a Theodoret.

time, it doth not appear that he was permitted to correspond with the churches, it is very natural to suppose, that in the first epistles, sent by him after so long a silence, he might judge it necessary, after this manner, to remind his friends and converts, of the doctrines which they were to believe, and of the duties which, as Christians, they were to perform.

The apostle having, in the former part of the chapter, thanked God for making known the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, which he had purposed in himself; the mystery which had been hidden for ages, namely, the calling of the Gentiles into his church and kingdom under the Messiah; proceeds to inform the Ephesians, that it gave him the highest satisfaction to hear of their steadfastness in the profession of true christianity: “ Wherefore, I also, after I heard
 “ of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and
 “ love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you.” As it now was five or six years since the apostle had quitted Ephesus, it was with great propriety that he mentioned the pleasure it gave him to
 hear

hear of their constancy in the faith which he had taught them, amidst so many temptations and trials.

For our instruction at this time, permit me, in the

I. First place, to explain the words of the text.

II. Secondly, to shew the inseparable connection between faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints.

III. Thirdly, to point out some reasons why the continuance of faith and love, is a matter of unceasing thankfulness to God. And lastly, to conclude with an improvement.

I. I am first to explain the words and phrases used in the text.

It is hardly necessary for me to observe, that the whole of religion is, in both the Old and New Testament, very often included in one or more eminent branches of it.

Thus in the text, faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all the saints, imply the

whole of our duty to God and man. The continuance of the Ephesian converts in all the doctrines and duties of christianity, was the cause of much joy to the apostle, and for which he ceased not to give thanks. But I shall, particularly, enquire into the meaning of these words, when used in an appropriated sense, by St. Paul, and by the other writers of the New Testament.

The term faith, hath in scripture various significations.

In the first place, the gospel, or the religion of Christ, is frequently called, faith. Thus it is said, “ That the word of God
“ increased, and that the number of the
“ disciples multiplied, greatly, in Jerusa-
“ lem, and that a great company of the
“ priests became obedient to the faith^b ;” that is, embraced the christian religion. See, also, Acts xiii, 8. xiv, 22, and many other places, where the word must be understood in this sense, and in no other.

2. Faith, in various passages, means trust and confidence in the power and goodness of God. In this sense it is used by our

^b Acts vi. 7.

Saviour,

Saviour: "Wherefore, says he, if God so
 " clothe the grafs of the field, which to-
 " day is, and to-morrow is cast into the
 " oven, shall he not much more clothe
 " you, O ye of little faith ^c!" Those who
 entertained any fuspicion of the divine care
 and goodness, he very justly called men of
 little faith.

In nearly the same sense the word is
 used by St. Paul, Romans, iii. 3. " Shall
 " their unbelief make the faith of God
 " of none effect?" Shall the unbelief,
 unfaithfulness, or wickedness, of the
 Jewish nation, make void the pro-
 mise of God to Abraham? " God forbid,"
 by no means; " yea, let God be true, but
 " every man a liar." His faith or word must
 be verified: his promise to the Patriarch
 Abraham, that he would be a God to him
 and to his seed after him, shall, certainly,
 be fulfilled, however unworthy of such a
 blessing his descendants may behave.

The same apostle hath given us a defi-
 nition of faith similar to that of which we
 are now speaking. " Faith is the substance
 " of things hoped for, the evidence of
 " things not seen ^d." It is the confident

^c Matth. vi. 30.

^d Heb. xi. 1.

expectation of the good things hoped for, upon the security of the divine promise. Or faith is that principle in the heart, which, as it were, gives existence to things as yet not in being. All the worthies mentioned in this celebrated chapter, depended wholly upon the divine promises. They all had such an unwavering confidence in, and such a firm persuasion of, the divine veracity, that they considered their reward to be as certain, as if they then had it in actual possession.

3. Again, Faith very often means a belief in the power of Jesus, to work miracles. “ Verily, I say unto you, said our “ Lord of the Centurion, I have not found “ so great faith, no, not in Israel.” This Roman officer’s belief in, and judgment concerning the power with which our Saviour acted, was much superior to what was found among the Jewish people, though they were so highly distinguished with spiritual blessings and privileges.

In this sense the word is used by our Lord, in his discourse with the woman who was diseased with an issue of blood.

“ Matth. viii. 10.

“ Thy

“ Thy faith hath made the whole ^f.” And in this sense, also, it is used by him in his answer to the woman of Canaan, who was interceding for her daughter, grievously vexed with a dæmon, “ O woman, great “ is thy faith ^g.” See, also, Luke v, 20. In short, the term faith is generally to be understood in this sense, when used by our Saviour in his discourses with those who applied to him for the removal of their diseases.

4. Lastly, Faith is the first act of the christian life. It is that principle, by which men receive, and obey the gospel. Or in other words, faith means such a firm persuasion that Jesus was sent of God to be the Saviour of men, such a strong conviction of the truth of his gospel, as disposeth a man to the most careful and diligent obedience to its commands.

St. Paul alludes to this kind of faith, and its genuine effects, when he says, “ that the word of faith which he preached was this ; if men should confess with “ their mouth the Lord Jesus, and should “ believe in their hearts that God raised

^f Matth. ix. 22.

^g Matth. xv. 28.

“ him from the dead, they should be
 “ saved ^b.” This is the saving faith of the
 gospel, without which it is impossible to
 please God, or to be qualified for happi-
 ness with him. Faith in the Lord Jesus,
 in our text, means the profession of chris-
 tianity. The steadfastness of the Ephesians
 in that profession, and in a suitable prac-
 tice, was the reason why the apostle ceased
 not to give thanks for them.

“ Love unto all the saints,” here con-
 nected with faith in the Lord Jesus, is an
 essential branch of the christian temper.
 The particular reason for which the apostle
 doth so often mention Love in this epistle,
 may be gathered from the second chapter,
 verse eleventh and following. He there
 speaks of the enmity between Jews and
 Gentiles, the cause of which was taken
 away by Christ. The ceasing of that en-
 mity, was one great mark of their being
 right in the faith. For as Christ had broken
 down the wall of partition between Jews
 and Gentiles, and had opened the kingdom
 of heaven to all who should believe in
 him, as the Messiah; their living together

^b Rom. x. 8, 9.

in peace and amity was no inconsiderable proof of their having just apprehensions of the nature and design of the christian dispensation. Love unto *all* the saints, in the text, seems to have a peculiar reference to this circumstance: that is, the Ephesians were not drawn aside by the judaizing christians to confine their esteem and affection to one party. On the contrary, they equally loved all their fellow-christians, whether of Jewish, or of Gentile extraction.

This love unto the saints, or unto the christian brethren, who are thus usually denominated in the epistolary parts of the new testament, consists of two particulars.

1. It implies in the first place, a real affection and esteem, as a principle in the heart. It means such a regard for our christian brethren, as will not only put an end to all strife, and animosity; all envy, malice and ill-will; but will also, in a great measure, prevent them. It means such a regard for our brethren, as will not only dispose us heartily to forgive them, when they may have injured us, but will strongly incline us to all acts of kindness
mercy

mercy and compassion. In short, it will incline us to do unto all men, as we could wish or desire, that they would do unto us.

2. But farther, as a consequence of such a principle in the heart, the outward behaviour will always be, affectionate, charitable and benevolent.

The man who is animated by unfeigned love of the brethren, will “ rejoice with “ them that rejoice, and weep with them “ that weep ⁱ.” He will pity, and sympathize with the afflicted and distressed, and, when his circumstances will permit him, he will freely, chearfully and liberally contribute to their relief and support.

But as the present life is exposed to numberless pressures and difficulties, which cannot be removed, nor always relieved by the greatest human power, influence or skill; wherever this divine principle prevails, it will dispose men to be frequent and earnest in their applications to that being, with whom nothing is impossible, to beseech his mercy and goodness to those unhappy sufferers, whose pains, sorrows,

ⁱ Rom. xii. 15.

OF distreffes he alone is able to alleviate or remove. In short, this love to the saints for which the Ephesians are commended, includes in it every thing kind, charitable, and benevolent, in both principle and practice. The apostle always reflected, with the highest pleasure, upon their stedfastness in the virtues of faith and love; and in his daily addressees to the throne of grace, he made mention of them, and prayed that they might yet abound more and more in every good word and work which might be to the glory of God by Christ Jesus.

II. Having thus endeavoured to explain the words, I now proceed, in the second place, to shew the inseparable connection, between faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints.

Virtue and vice, as they depend upon the unchangeable nature of the Deity, must be essentially and eternally different. Piety and goodness are in themselves always right, and, therefore, in all situations and circumstances ought to be carefully attended to: impiety and wickedness are always wrong,
and

and, therefore, ought always to be guarded against, and avoided.

The first great duty of both natural and revealed religion is the love of God. In the expressive language of the New Testament it is to " Love the Lord our God, " with all our heart, with all our soul, " with all our strength, and with all our " might ^k. " This, says Christ, is the " first and great commandment of the law ; " and the second is like unto it, namely, " thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy- " self ^l."

The connection of these two principles must be evident to every considering mind. Are we not all the offspring of one common parent ? Are we not alike the creatures of one God, preserved and maintained by him ? Are we not supported with all the conveniencies and necessities of life, out of his inexhaustible treasures ? When we, therefore, consider ourselves as thus equally dependant upon his bounty and goodness, we must feel ourselves, under the strongest and most powerful obligations, to love, mercy, and charity.

^k Luke x. 27,

^l Matth. xxii, 37, &c.

Shall brethren disagree, shall those fall out by the way, who are supported by the same benevolence, preserved by the same power, animated by the same hopes, and designed for the same state of bliss and immortality? Shall creatures in these circumstances not always live and love like brethren?

Thus it appears, that there is, in nature, a connexion, between the love of God and of our neighbour; that our state and condition in the present life, render esteem and mutual kind offices, absolutely necessary to our well-being. And thus the matter is represented by the apostle John, “ If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen^m?”

But, farther, this is more especially the duty of those who call themselves the disciples of the blessed and benevolent Jesus. A selfish, unfeeling, and merciless christian, is a perfect contradiction; for the very profession of the gospel demands, not

^m 1 John iv. 20.

only,

only, the forgiveness of injuries, but, also, the most unbounded love and benevolence.

Our divine master hath expressly declared this brotherly affection to be the characteristical badge of all his true disciples, without which, indeed, they can have no right to that honourable name. “ By this, “ said he, shall all men know that ye are “ *my* disciples, if ye have love one to another.” It is observable, that this duty is more frequently recommended in the New Testament than any other; and appeared of so great a value and importance in the sight of our blessed Lord, that he called it, by way of eminence, a new commandment. A new commandment give I unto you, said he, that ye love one another. And as a motive, he proposed his own most amiable example, “ As I have loved you, that ye also love “ one another.” In another place, he says, “ This is my commandment, “ that ye love one another, as I have “ loved you. Greater love hath no man “ than this, that a man lay down his “ life for his friends ^p.”

^a John xiii. 35. ^o John xiii. 34. ^p John xv. 12, 13.

His apostles, also, lay the utmost stress upon the love of the brethren. St. Paul, in all his epistles, is very frequent and earnest in his exhortations to this eminent christian virtue. "Owe no man any thing," says he, "but to love one another, for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law¹." And in another passage he hath given us a remarkable proof of the strength of this divine principle in his own heart. "I could wish that myself were accursed with or like² Christ, for my brethren my kinsmen according to the flesh³." That is, I could wish that I myself was devoted to suffering and death as Christ was, if thereby my kinsmen according to the flesh might be saved. Thus he expressed himself in behalf of his bitterest enemies.

St. James, says, "that to love our neighbour as ourselves is fulfilling the royal

¹ Rom. xiii. 8.

² We are justified in giving this sense to this celebrated passage by the use which the same apostle makes of the greek preposition *ὑπὲρ*, 2 Tim. i. 3. "Whom I serve from my forefathers;" i. e. Whom I serve as my forefathers did. "And here, I could wish myself accursed," i. e. devoted to the greatest sufferings, even to death itself, as Christ was, for my kinsmen according to the flesh.— See Pastor, Dugard, and Rawley's Scholar's Companion.

³ Rom. ix. 3.

“ law according to the scripture *.” And St. Peter, recommending the same disposition, says, “ Seeing you have purified
 “ your souls in obeying the truth through
 “ the spirit, unto unfeigned love of the
 “ brethren; see that ye love one another
 “ with a pure heart fervently.” In short, the apostle John, in all his writings, is distinguished for the most frequent and earnest exhortations to this branch of the christian temper. His disposition bore so strong a resemblance to that of Christ, that he seemed particularly to have imbibed his tender and benevolent spirit, and it was with great propriety, that he was called “ the disciple whom Jesus
 “ loved.”

St. Paul, also, in our text, hath joined together, “ Faith in the Lord Jesus, and
 “ love unto all the saints,” as the duties which he had often and earnestly inculcated upon the Ephesians; and their continuance in which, we find, gave him so much joy, that he “ ceased not to
 “ give thanks for them.” See, also, Coloss. i. 4. 1 Thess. i. 2, 3. 2 Thess. i. 3.

* James ii. 8. “ 1 Peter i. 22. w John xiii. 23.

From the whole, then, it appears, that the profession of Christianity indispensably requires the love of the brethren : “ that they who believe on the name of “ Jesus Christ, should love one another *.” The religion of Jesus is a religion of love, it is the effect of divine unmerited love to a race of degenerate perishing creatures, and, therefore, “ If God hath so loved us, “ as to send his Son to redeem us, we ought “ also to love one another ’.”

III. The third thing we proposed to do was, to point out some reasons why the continuance of faith and love is a matter of unceasing thankfulness to God.

It is most certainly true that the Supreme Being can derive no advantage from the adorations, praises, and services of any creature, however excellent ; because he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever ; incapable of either an increase, or diminution, of happiness. Prayer and praise are, however, duties of eternal unalterable obligation, upon all intelligent beings. As God is the author of our existence, to whose bounty, goodness and benevo-

* 1 John iii. 23.

† 1 John iv. 11.

lence we owe all our present mercies and future hopes; to glorify him, is a duty, which cannot be dispensed with. The most acceptable praise that we can offer to God is, to adorn ourselves with all the graces of a holy life; to abound in all piety and goodness: “ herein, said Christ, “ is my father glorified, that ye bear “ much fruit ^a.” And in another place, “ Let your light so shine before men, “ that they may see your good works, and “ glorify your father who is in heaven ^b.” To the same purpose St. Paul, “ Being “ filled with the fruits of righteousness “ which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory “ and praise of God ^c.” To praise or glorify God, therefore, is to excel in every virtue which is recommended by the gospel, and is illustrated by the example, of Christ.

But besides this general notion of praising God, by the right improvement of his mercies; there is a particular sense, in which this phrase is to be understood; namely, as meaning that part of divine worship, wherein we confess, in words, the benefits we receive from God. This

^a John xv. 8.

^b Matth. v. 16.

^c Philip. i. 11.

is the apostle's meaning when he says, in the text, that he ceased not to give thanks for the Ephesians. That is, he omitted not, humbly to acknowledge, in the divine presence, the goodness of the Deity to them, in directing and assisting them to persevere in every christian virtue; especially in faith in the Lord Jesus, and in love unto all the saints.

Religion, in general, is absolutely necessary to salvation, and, therefore, its prevalence must be highly pleasing to every man who is himself actuated by its genuine principles. This is not only a matter of rejoicing, but a matter also of thankfulness. As faith and charity are very eminent branches of religion, and are necessary to happiness, especially under the christian dispensation; their increase and continuance, will always yield a good man the truest and most substantial joy, for the following reasons.

In the first place, because this is for the honor of Christ and his gospel. We have above seen, that God can alone be truly glorified, by the holiness of our lives. In the same manner also must the honor of Christ be promoted.

The man who sees his obligations to the Saviour, by whom he was redeemed from sin, death, and the grave; and through whom he now can extend his view, beyond the limits of time, and, as it were, catch a glimpse of eternity; this man's breast glows with the sincerest gratitude, and is desirous of nothing so fervently, as to promote the cause and interest of so kind and gracious a benefactor. His even, blameless, and exemplary conversation, is an unquestionable proof that he retains a grateful remembrance of his obligations to the Saviour; and he cannot but highly rejoice and be thankful, when he sees his humble endeavours blessed as the means to bring others to have the same sentiments of their obligations. He can truly say, "That he hath no greater joy, " than to see his fellow-creatures walking " in the truth "; abounding in every work of piety, goodness and righteousness.

Farther, as the design of the gospel was to promote the increase of these graces; every man who is sensible of their importance, will rejoice to see that it is effectual, in any measure, to secure that end. He

will be thankful to God, the author of every good and perfect gift, for his merciful interposition to save an undeserving race of creatures from final destruction; more especially, when he perceives its happy effects in reclaiming them from their vices, and animating them in the pursuit of those virtues, which alone will fit them for immortality. These appearances will give pleasure to every good man, will always make him thankful, because they are a full proof of the wisdom and excellency of the christian religion.

Again, the increase of piety and goodness, is the increase of human happiness.

It is the observation of the apostle, “ that
“ godliness is profitable unto all things,
“ having promise of the life that now
“ is, and of that which is to come ^d.”
That this observation is just, is evident from the experience of all ages. That we may not be charged with depending altogether upon the supposed partial testimony of one side, we will appeal to the experience of even the sensualist and libertine. We will ask him, whether the pleasures which he so eagerly pursues, have ever

^d 1 Tim. iv. 8.

answered his expectations? Whether even, in actual enjoyment, they do not sooner cloy than satisfy? Most assured I am, that if a man of this character will speak ingenuously, he will acknowledge, with the wise king Solomon, “that all the works
 “ which his hands have wrought, all the
 “ labor that he hath labored to do, and all
 “ the sensual criminal gratifications, which
 “ he hath so ardently pursued; that all
 “ are vanity and vexation of spirit.” Nay, he will acknowledge that the very recollection of his past dissipated and immoral life, now fills him with the keenest remorse and anguish! On the other hand, let us appeal to the man of virtue, and from his own glad experience, he is able to assure us, that unfeigned religion, a love to God and man, is always accompanied by the truest joy, peace, comfort and happiness: that he hath found “the ways of
 “ wisdom to be ever ways of pleasantness,
 “ and that all her paths are peace.” They who experience this heart-felt happiness, will always rejoice to see their fellow creatures the votaries of religion; will be thankful to divine goodness, for their

* Eccles. ii. 11.

f Prov. iii. 17.

increase and steadfastness in it ; and will wish that others, also, may taste of that unspeakable pleasure, which is the chief satisfaction and joy of their lives.

Lastly, when a pious good man reflects upon the difficulties and distresses of human life ; upon the numerous instances of bodily pains and afflictions, which very often are the portion of those in necessitous circumstances, he will be filled with unfeigned sorrow : but when he sees so much unhappiness and wretchedness, in any measure, relieved by the charity and compassion of the world, he will feel the utmost satisfaction ; and will pay his warmest acknowledgments to heaven for those degrees of love and benevolence, which are calculated to alleviate the infelicities and miseries of human life.

For these, and the like, reasons, the increase and continuance of faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, will always be a matter of rejoicing to every good man ; and, of consequence, will dispose him gratefully and frequently to acknowledge the divine love and goodness thus manifested to the wretched among the children of men.

Having

Having thus finished what was at first proposed, I shall now conclude the subject with an improvement.

1. In the first place, we learn from what hath been said, that the religion of Jesus is a rational religion.

When we examine the contents of the sacred volume, we find them most wisely suited to the circumstances of creatures in a state of degeneracy and sin. We perceive that the whole of revelation is plainly consistent with itself, and with all the natural sentiments of the human mind. “ Its doctrines are sublime, its precepts
“ just, its observations pertinent, its reasonings clear and conclusive, its promises
“ animating, and its threatnings truly
“ alarming.” In short, the evident design of the sacred gospel is to deliver mankind from the power and dominion of sin and iniquity ; and to excite them to the pursuit of universal truth, righteousness, and holiness, as the only way by which they can attain to a blessed immortality. We find, on a careful perusal, that the scriptures contain an amazing sublimity of sentiment, expressed, for the most part, in a beautiful simplicity of language ; and that
the

the whole was plainly intended, not to perplex the understanding, but to purify and refine the heart.

However, this notion of christianity, though unquestionably just, hath too little obtained in the world. For many, through either weakness or wickedness, have fathered doctrines upon the gospel, which are entirely subversive of its original and peculiar design. This is well known, and, therefore, instances are unnecessary.

We have above seen that “ Faith in
 “ the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the
 “ saints,” cannot be separated: therefore
 wherever the latter doth not prevail and
 increase, it is most certain that the former is not genuine. To this purpose are the words of the apostle, “ What doth
 “ it profit, my brethren, though a man
 “ say, he hath faith, and have not works?
 “ can faith save him? If a brother or sister
 “ be naked and be destitute of daily food;
 “ and one of you say unto them, depart
 “ in peace, be ye warmed and be ye filled:
 “ notwithstanding ye give them not those
 “ things which are needful to the body;
 “ what doth it profit? Even so faith,
 “ if it hath not works, is dead, being
 “ alone.

“ alone ^g.” Genuine “ faith worketh by
 “ love ^h.” It is not a lifeless notion in the
 head, but an active and animating principle
 in the heart, ever inclining men to
 “ live soberly, righteously, and godly in
 “ this present world ⁱ.” A meer assent
 to the truth therefore, without a suitable
 practice, is of no avail as to the real
 purposes of religion.

In short, as God is the supreme, un-
 erring, eternal reason, every thing which
 he reveals must be rational wise and good ;
 for he cannot contradict the perfections of
 his own unchangeable nature.

I shall conclude this particular in the
 words of a late learned writer. “ Christia-
 “ nity differs from meer morality only as a
 “ perfect rule differs from a defective one,
 “ not in kind, but in degree. It is mo-
 “ rality improved, enlarged, and refined,
 “ exalted to a nobler height, enjoined by
 “ a plainer rule, enforced by stronger
 “ motives, and directed to a higher
 “ end ^k.”

^g James ii. 14. &c. ^h Gal. v. 6. Titus ii. 12.

^k Mason's Lord's-day Evening Entertainment, Vol. I.
 Sermon 12.

2. But secondly, from what hath been said, we learn also the great excellency of love to the brethren.

Our profession of christianity lays us under peculiar obligations to charity and benevolence. The blessed Jesus will not acknowledge a selfish hard-hearted man to be his disciple, for he is deficient in one of the chief qualifications of a real christian.

The nature and necessity of love to the brethren hath already been considered: we shall now more especially consider its excellency.

Of all christian graces, this is by St. Paul represented as the principal. He places it above all spiritual gifts; above the gift of prophecy, and understanding all mysteries; above faith to remove mountains; and even above the giving of the body to be burned. And at last he says, "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity^k." The apostle is here speaking of charity as a principle in the heart, and not merely of its consequences, such as acts of kindness and compassion. Benevolence in

^k 1 Corinth- xiii.

practice is not a certain proof of unfeigned love to the brethren, but may arise from another cause, such as ostentation and a desire of popular applause: these may induce many to acts of mercy and goodness wherein their hearts are no way concerned. But however useful to men such liberality may be, yet, as not flowing from the right principle, it is not acceptable to God, who judgeth of every action by the disposition of the heart. When men are kind and munificent only with a design of obtaining human approbation, our blessed Lord hath told us, that they must expect no recompense from God. “ Verily, says he, they have their reward¹. ” That is, they have that admiration and applause of which they are so desirous.

The wickedness of the times is a very general complaint, and, no doubt, is frequently made by those who neither understand the real cause, nor, by their countenance or assistance, in the least contribute to a reformation. The prevailing vices of the age, are, in a very great measure, owing to the want of a proper education. There the mischief begins, and until the

¹ Matth. vi. 2.

education of youth is more attended to, we can have but little room to expect any considerable reformation of manners. This is a loud call upon every parent and every master of a family to exert his utmost influence, in instilling the principles of true religion into the minds of his children and dependants. Their offspring are a charge of great importance, committed to parents, by the author of life and being, and for which they must be accountable to him. How dreadful to think that a child should perish for ever, through the neglect of his parents! May Heaven preserve every parent in this assembly from incurring this aggravated guilt!

But it is the misfortune of very many children to be descended from parents, who may be neither inclined nor able to give them proper instruction. These are a very considerable part of the community, and according as they are brought up in younger life, they generally turn out to be either useful, or hurtful to the public. Some methods, therefore, ought to be taken to deliver them from ignorance and vice, and make them profitable in their stations. With a view to secure this very desirable

5 end,

end, charity schools were erected, that the children of the poor might be trained up in the knowledge of their duty to God and man, and be taught to be serviceable, according to their rank, in society. Time hath since confirmed the wisdom, importance and excellence of such benevolent institutions.

The charity to the support of which I am now to solicit your liberal assistance, is one that highly deserves it, on account of both the original intention, and of the prudent and discreet manner in which it hath been conducted. Its design was to prevent the growth of Popery; to save the offspring of the poor from being deluded by the busy emissaries of Rome, and from becoming traytors to their king, and enemies to their country. Its design was to instruct those in the principles of true religion, who otherwise might be the prey of ignorance, idleness, and wickedness, and to qualify them for contributing their part to the prosperity of their native land. This school hath now subsisted above eighty years, supported by private voluntary subscriptions, and by two annual collections, together

together with the kind remembrance of it by some in their last wills.

It was erected in very critical times, towards the latter end of the reign of King James the Second, and upon this occasion.

One Poulton a Jesuit, encouraged, no doubt, by the countenance and support of James himself, undertook to instruct the children of the poor, gratis; that he might have an opportunity to instill into them the principles of Popery. This artful scheme immediately awakened the attention of three worthy Gentlemen belonging to this church, who without delay projected a plan to counter-act the crafty design of the Jesuit, by erecting another school on the most liberal protestant principles. The number of scholars at first was Forty, then it increased to Fifty, and is now about Two hundred. Here is no distinction made, with respect to the differing sects of Protestants; the general good being alone intended. The school is situated in one of the poorest parts, in and about this great city, and the children are furnished with bibles, catechisms, with writing and cyphering books, at the

Mr. Arthur Shallet, Mr. Ferdinando Holland, and
Mr. Samuel Warburton,

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expence

expenditure of the charity, and the girls are taught to sew and knit.

As the children are chiefly designed for the common offices of life, or useful trades, great care is taken to fix their attention on honest industry and frugality, as the only means by which they are to expect a comfortable subsistence.

This is the nature, this is the design, of the excellent charity, to the support of which I now beg your assistance. A charity so well intended, and so well managed, I presume, wants not many words to recommend it. Indeed, when I reflect upon the present flourishing state of the school, I am ready to say with the apostle in the text, "That I also, after I heard of your
 " faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto
 " all the saints," to these helpless children in particular, "cease not to give thanks
 " for you." And I sincerely pray that the blessing of heaven may attend every one who either contributes to, or is any way concerned in the management of this highly useful charity! However, though, upon the whole, I consider a particular application to your liberality, upon this occasion, as almost unnecessary; yet I cannot omit observing, as a strong motive to the continuance

continuance of it, that a reflection upon the part you take in this charity, must fill your breasts with unspeakable pleasure. With what joy and delight will you consider yourselves as instrumental to the happiness of such a number of poor helpless young creatures; that your assistance may save them from being wicked and wretched in this world, and from being destroyed for ever, and will help to train them up in the ways of virtue, ornaments to christianity and blessings to society! Think, with what pleasure you will meet them hereafter, in the holy mount of God; joint heirs with you in the heavenly kingdom. This joy is peculiarly yours, and is the present reward of your labor of love, of your goodness and benevolence. But as to your reward in futurity, suffice it to say, that it will far exceed your most sanguine expectations!

Before I conclude, let me observe that this season of the year seems to be happily fixed upon to excite your liberality. This is a season in which we all experience the advantage of the necessaries and conveniences of life; the want of which, we know, many of our kind labor under. This consideration surely must incline us to

their relief, to whom providence hath not
 been so bountiful as to ourselves.
 . . . Further, this season is well adapted to
 the purpose of charity, as it is usually em-
 ployed in casting up the profit and loss of
 the whole year. To beseech your cha-
 rity, therefore, at this time, is giving you
 an opportunity, in the beginning of a new
 year, to shew your sense of the divine
 goodness, by devoting some part of your
 substance to the honor of God, and to the
 service of religion. You now may distin-
 guish yourselves as lovers of the brethren.
 And, as you hope for success in the cur-
 rent year, equal to what you may have
 had in the last, consecrate some part of
 your profits, to the education of these
 poor children, who, when you are no
 more, may be taught to praise the Lord.
 In one word, let us all, in our dif-
 ferent situations, countenance and sup-
 port the cause and interest of true religion,
 especially, among the rising generation;
 that Britain may be distinguished more
 and more as the seat of true piety, cha-
 rity, liberty and learning, till time shall be
 swallowed up in eternity. : Amen.

John 12:12-13
 This consideration must incline us to
 their

